



MEDIA RELEASE

DR CRAIG EMERSON

Minister for Trade

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Emerson to co-chair Cairns Group meeting in Canada

Trade Minister Craig Emerson departs today for Canada to chair the 36th Cairns Group Ministerial Meeting, which brings together many of the world's leading agriculture exporting nations.

The Ministerial Meeting will be held from September 7 to 9 in Saskatoon, in the central-south province of Saskatchewan. It will be hosted and co-chaired by Canadian Minister for Agriculture Gerry Ritz.

The Cairns Group comprises 19 developed and developing agricultural exporting countries with a commitment to achieving further trade liberalisation in agriculture. Members include Indonesia, Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, New Zealand, Argentina and Peru.

The Ministerial Meeting this year will be attended by ministers and officials from the Cairns Group, along with invited guests from the European Union, Japan, Russia and the United States.

This year's event comes at a crucial time for the World Trade Organization (WTO), amid difficulties in finding a breakthrough in the long-running Doha Round of negotiations on trade liberalisation.

The 8th Ministerial Conference of the WTO will be held in Geneva in December.

"Cairns Group ministers will be considering possible pathways to move the dead-locked negotiations forward," Dr Emerson said.

"As an influential group of agricultural exporters, the Cairns Group will also reinforce the case for agricultural trade reform to be at the core of any global trade deal."

Cairns Group ministers will also discuss the importance of open, efficient and transparent markets, and the need for trade reform to address food security.

"The world produces more than enough food to feed itself," Dr Emerson said.

"Despite this, an estimated one billion people go to bed hungry every night.

"Removing trade barriers and ensuring an open global trading system will increase the supply of food and help more food get to where it is needed," he said.

Among a series of bilateral meetings at the event, Dr Emerson will hold talks with Russian Minister for Agriculture Elena Skrynnik on a range of issues including Russia's pending accession to the WTO.

"Russia is the largest economy outside the WTO, and its accession will reinforce the importance of the multilateral trading system," Dr Emerson said.

Dr Emerson said he would also work to secure for Australian exporters long-term, stable market access arrangements, particularly in agriculture.

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